

## REVITALIZING THE COOPERATIVE STRATEGY FOR 21ST CENTURY SEAPOWER

BY

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USAWC STRATEGY RESEARCH PROJECT

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by

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## ABSTRACT

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The U.S. Navy released its *A Cooperative Strategy for 21st Century Seapower* in 2007. Written in conjunction with the U.S. Marine Corps and the Coast Guard, the strategy defines six core capabilities that will achieve the overarching maritime and national strategic end states of preventing war and building partnerships. The CNO reaffirmed the Navy's commitment to the precepts of the *Cooperative Strategy* as recently as October 2010 in a memorandum entitled "Executing the Maritime Strategy". The U.S. is now beginning to redeploy units from Iraq and Afghanistan in an effort to end years of combat operations in the Middle East while, at the same time, it is examining every avenue possible for minimizing defense expenditures. With the reduced number of deployed combat forces, the U.S. Navy is likely to become the first choice of policymakers for foreign engagement, humanitarian response, and for signaling national interests. Given this probability and the looming era of fiscal retraction, it is time to revise and update the 2007 strategy, and to define: 1) how it supports the National Security Strategy; 2) what assets the Navy requires to achieve its missions; 3) and how the Navy will partner with allied nations to maximize capabilities.





## REVITALIZING THE COOPERATIVE STRATEGY FOR 21ST CENTURY SEAPOWER

In 2007 the U.S. Navy, in conjunction with the U.S. Marine Corps and Coast Guard, promulgated the first new U.S. naval strategy since 1986 with the release of *A Cooperative Strategy for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Seapower*.<sup>1</sup> A mere 15 pages, the new strategy proved to be concise and succinct. It defined six core capabilities that, if attained, would contribute to national security by either preventing war or by building partnerships. The strategy also outlined expected maritime strategic imperatives and implementation priorities in a cogent and well reasoned manner.<sup>2</sup>

No significant changes or revisions to the *Cooperative Strategy* have been released despite significant changes in the domestic and international landscapes since 2007. In October of 2010, the Chief of Naval Operations, Admiral Gary Roughead, issued a guidance memorandum entitled *Executing the Maritime Strategy*. He stated, “We continue to be forward deployed and engaged around the world. Delivering the core capabilities of our Maritime Strategy, which I released three years ago. Our Maritime Strategy remains relevant. It has been affirmed by events over the past few years and by the recent conclusion from the 2010 Quadrennial Defense Review and the Quadrennial Defense Review Independent Panel Report commissioned by Congress.”<sup>3</sup>

The 2007 *Cooperative Strategy for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Seapower* serves a purpose as the base document for establishing the Navy’s maritime strategy, but it needs further development in four key areas in order to better guide naval acquisition decisions in an increasingly austere budgetary environment. First, the *Cooperative Strategy* needs to fully address the means (fleet requirements) necessary to connect the strategy’s ways and ends. Second, it must better define potential maritime threats. Third, it needs to be

more completely aligned with the National Security Strategy. Fourth, it should outline a strategy for maximizing maritime capabilities with our closest maritime partners. The *Cooperative Strategy* asserts that the U.S. Navy will dominate in all forms of maritime warfare, but it does not prioritize capabilities or competencies in a way that informs lawmakers and the public about the future fleet.

The purpose of this essay is to address these issues and illustrate why it is crucial for the Navy to specifically justify and articulate its force requirements to Congress and the American people. In order for the Navy to be on the strongest possible footing in the future and to stay ahead of budgetary issues on the horizon, it must revitalize the *Cooperative Strategy* to include these force requirements before defense budget cuts come.

### The Cooperative Strategy for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Seapower

Soon after its release, the *Cooperative Strategy for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Seapower* generated significant debate within the military, academic, and defense analytic communities. Some of the principal concerns that were expressed included criticism that the strategy was not really a “strategy” because it failed to define and link its ends, ways, and means.<sup>4</sup> Another perspective asserted that the document “fails to differentiate clearly and prioritize present day threats, accordingly it lacks focus.”<sup>5</sup> In a critique in the spring 2008 *Naval War College Review*, William Pendley argued that this lack of focus resulted in a list of core capabilities in search of a strategy.<sup>6</sup> Finally, many reviewers pointed out that the maritime strategy had lost its linkage to the overarching National Security Strategy (NSS). The Obama administration promulgated its new NSS early in 2010 and it was followed within seven months by the 2010 Quadrennial

Defense Review (QDR) and 2011 National Military Strategy. Ideally, U.S. maritime strategy should be directly linked to all three documents.

Most analysts were principally concerned with the document's omission of the specific means with which naval strategists intend to achieve the articulated ends. The ways were spelled out very clearly in the form of six core capabilities:

- Forward Presence.
- Deterrence.
- Sea Control.
- Power Projection.
- Maritime Security.
- Humanitarian Assistance & Disaster Response.<sup>7</sup>

The strategy stated that the “six capabilities comprise the core of U.S. maritime power and reflect an increase in emphasis on those activities that prevent war and build partnerships.”<sup>8</sup> Professor Robert Rubel, Dean of Naval Warfare Studies at the Naval War College, and a primary architect of the 2007 *Cooperative Strategy for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Seapower*, offered additional explanation stating, “the protection of the existing global system of trade and security (as opposed to the process of globalization) provided both the context for the new strategy and the intellectual glue that tied together all regions of the world.”<sup>9</sup> That explanation helps clarify the strategic end – preservation of the current international system – but gets us no closer to the means. Professor Rubel also addressed the lack of articulated means by explaining that an injunction on any discussion of the force structure necessary to support the maritime strategy was in effect during the strategy development sessions.<sup>10</sup> Rubel acknowledged that many

were frustrated that the strategy failed to address forces, but he asserted that the strategy provides “an overarching logic from which future force structure could be deduced.”<sup>11</sup>

It is now three years later however and the Navy has yet to formally deduce the means. We have at this juncture the ways and ends, but not the means, in the *Cooperative Strategy for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Seapower*. British naval analyst Geoffrey Till best sums up this dilemma in his recent book *Seapower* stating, “Strategic Theory, obviously, is thinking about strategy, trying to ‘put it all together’ through the development of a skein of connected thought about the nature, conduct, and consequences of naval power.”<sup>12</sup>

A generally defensive strategy, the *Cooperative Strategy for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Seapower* never identifies specific threats. Indeed, there has been a heated discussion by critics about the pros and cons of the document’s failure to identify specific threats. While non-state threats surely exist in the maritime realm, state actors continue to wield the vast bulk of the power. Moreover, the primary advantage for the military in writing strategy is that it is expected to address potential future threats, and to propose the means of dealing with them. In order to fight and win the nation’s wars, the Navy must know who its likely adversaries might be, and how they would act in the event of conflict.

Although U.S. land forces currently struggle with the asymmetric tactics of state and non-state actors, there has been little fundamental change in the conduct of maritime warfare in recent years. The current environment still requires naval vessels at sea to conduct the various missions articulated in the six core competencies.

Warships are still the exclusive domain of state actors. Some pundits may cite piracy as a maritime wildcard – something analogous to an asymmetric, non-state actor threat in the maritime domain. But piracy is still countered with traditional maritime warfare principles and, even at its most aggressive, piracy only rises to the level of an ‘important’ threat from a national security perspective.<sup>13</sup>

Rubel offered “that if the strategy’s purpose is to prevent war among major powers and generate the widest possible maritime cooperation, why create hostility by singling out specific countries as threats?”<sup>14</sup> But possible adversaries ought to be identified for planning purposes since naval activity still falls within the province of states. The 2010 NSS states that the U.S. will “monitor China’s military modernization program and prepare accordingly to ensure that U.S. interests and allies, regionally and globally, are not negatively affected.”<sup>15</sup> It is natural and indeed necessary for the Navy to follow up on this general guidance with a more specific assessment of the strategic threat and the means necessary to meet it.

Those who argue that the maritime strategy was written in isolation from national grand strategy have a point. The project, though, was undertaken at the end of the George W. Bush administration and the project leader understood that the resulting maritime strategy would not be a simple reiteration of existing strategic guidance. Professor Rubel added, “This may seem somehow subversive to those who are used to military planning processes in which guidance from higher headquarters is regarded as holy writ. However, consider our situation – the project was undertaken at the end of the Bush administration and our requirement was to look ahead twenty years.”<sup>16</sup>

The larger point is simply that the *Cooperative Strategy* can easily be folded into any national guidance. In the case of the 2010 *National Security Strategy*, the *Cooperative Strategy for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Seapower* arguably supports all four of the United States' enduring national security interests:

- The security of the United States, its citizens, and U.S. allies and partners;
- A strong, innovative, and growing U.S. economy in an open international economic system that promotes opportunity and prosperity;
- Respect for universal values at home and around the world; and
- An international order advanced by U.S. leadership that promotes peace, security, and opportunity through stronger cooperation to meet global challenges.<sup>17</sup>

The maritime strategy's concepts are in alignment with enduring American interests, but they need to be specific enough to serve as a way forward for the Navy in the turbulent times characterized principally by tight budgetary constraints. As is, the document is a "good start": a foundation from which to revise and sharpen a new strategy for relevance in the next two decades.

In terms of a foundation, the document has several important assets. The *Cooperative Strategy for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Seapower* clearly defines the ways (six core capabilities) that the Navy will conduct operations in order to accomplish the six key tasks or "strategic imperatives" to "influence actions and activities at sea and ashore,"<sup>18</sup>

- Limit regional conflict with forward deployed, decisive maritime power.
- Deter major power war.
- Win our Nation's wars.

- Contribute to homeland defense in depth.
- Foster and sustain cooperative relationships with more international partners.
- Prevent or contain local disruptions before they impact the global system.<sup>19</sup>

The Navy is on solid doctrinal ground going forward by having laid out the fundamental tasks it must be able to carry out.

The *Cooperative Strategy for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Seapower* also delivers a clear end state: “Our challenge is to apply seapower in a manner that protects U.S. vital interests even as it promotes greater collective security, stability, and trust.”<sup>20</sup> It then advances the important goals of deterrence and the building of maritime partnerships, trust, and confidence with other nations through collective security efforts that focus on common threats.<sup>21</sup> Another important aspect of the strategy is the observation that “seapower will be a unifying force for building a better tomorrow.”<sup>22</sup> This sentence is italicized in the original document, but four years later it seems even more prescient than when it was first written.

Academic realists advancing the concept of “offshore balancing” have argued that the long-term security interests of the U.S. are better served by keeping troops “near unstable or failed states but not actually stationing them there, where their presence provokes local resentment - and, ultimately, violent resistance.”<sup>23</sup> One recent articulation of this argument, Robert Pape’s new book, *Cutting the Fuse*, explains that 87 percent of documented suicide attacks since 2004 can be associated with ground and tactical air forces based in insurgent-contested countries.<sup>24</sup>

This argument has clear implications for naval forces and naval strategy. After years of U.S. ground campaigns in Iraq and Afghanistan, political leaders will be

attracted to strategic approaches that reduce the world's perception of the U.S. as a unilateral actor, that reduce or eliminate American casualties, and, most importantly, that reduce costs while still serving national interests. It is likely that the American footprint is going to shrink in the Middle East during the coming decade, and a transition to a maritime-focused presence inevitably will result.<sup>25</sup> But at this juncture the U.S. Navy must further articulate and operationalize the means and mechanisms for reestablishing a dominant position in the realm of U.S. national security against a backdrop of inevitable budget cuts and limited resources.

Robert Kaplan predicted in 2007 that “Hulls in the water could soon displace boots on the ground as the most important military catchphrase of our time.” But then he pondered the inevitable follow-up question, stating, “How we manage dwindling naval resources will go a long way toward determining our future standing in the world.”<sup>26</sup> This concept is echoed in the 2010 Quadrennial Defense Review (QDR), “The future operational landscape could also portend significant long-duration air and maritime campaigns for which the U.S. Armed Forces must be prepared.”<sup>27</sup> This comment is in a paragraph entitled, “Prepare to defeat adversaries and succeed in a wide range of contingencies,” but it does not clearly define whether these long-duration campaigns are an expectation for a move to ‘offshore balancing’ or a veiled reference to a specific threat such as China. Nonetheless, preparation for a long-duration maritime campaign means knowing what kind of fleet will be required to get the job done.

One of the concluding comments in the *Cooperative Strategy for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Seapower* reads, “The strategy focuses on opportunities – not threats; on optimism – not fear; and on confidence – not doubt.”<sup>28</sup> This statement comes in the wake of a



generally positive and upbeat outline of the Navy's focus on core capabilities and implementation priorities. The problem is that the lack of an outline – or even a sketch – of potential threats leaves decision makers and indeed the public without guidance for making what are certain to be hard strategic choices. This is a significant concern. In a 1954 article in *Proceedings*, the journal of the U.S. Naval Institute in Annapolis, a young Samuel P. Huntington commented on this issue with the often cited advisory:

The resources which a service is able to obtain in a democratic society are a function of the public support of that service. The service has a responsibility to develop this necessary support, and it can only do this if it possesses a strategic concept which clearly formulates its relationship to the national security.<sup>29</sup>

If the Navy wishes to win Congressional and public support for what it deems to be its most essential programs – and if it wishes to do so in very tight economic times – then it will have to lay out specific arguments and justify specific expenditures on those programs. The mantra of a “global force for good,” and a span of core capabilities that are all things to all people may garner general support and even improve recruiting, but it will not necessarily pry open the public purse. On its own terms as a general strategy, the 2007 document was largely fine. But it needed to be supplemented with a more specific set of requirements justified in specific and robust terms. If this budgetary kind of argument is not made soon, the Navy will fall behind in the research and development process.

Seth Cropsey, a former deputy senior undersecretary of the Navy in the Reagan and George H.W. Bush administrations, concluded an analysis on what he describes as the slow decline of the U.S. Navy with the following observation:

A maritime strategy of deterrence through ‘thinking locally and acting globally’, as the oft-seen bumper sticker advocates, matches the sensibilities of most Western European populations today. It will never

command the same respect and support as a strategy based on the nation's need to protect against multiplying ballistic missile threats and seaborne WMD. Its silence about the dangers of China's rising naval power is a strategic blunder as well as a lost opportunity to educate and gather public support. Maritime strategy that seeks lesser goals threatens irreparable damage to our alliances, prestige, and the international system that American policy has labored to create for the past century.<sup>30</sup>

Cropsey's pointed commentary appropriately emphasizes the criticality of specifying potential threats and articulating a strategy to protect against them and, in the process, educating leaders and the public to establish that critical base of support. In October 2010, Admiral Roughhead began the process of articulating these needs, but thus far the progress has been only partial.

#### Executing the Maritime Strategy

Admiral Roughhead released his guidance for 2011 message in October 2010. In it he made a few key statements regarding the *Cooperative Strategy for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Seapower* including, "Our Maritime Strategy remains relevant. It has been affirmed by events over the past few years and by the recent conclusions from the 2010 Quadrennial Defense Review."<sup>31</sup>

Admiral Roughhead also pointed out that turbulence in the future global security environment would most likely translate to an increased demand on the Navy.<sup>32</sup> He went on to state that the Navy requires a minimum of 313 ships to meet operational requirements globally.<sup>33</sup> The guidance message stipulates that "a long view is necessary to ensure our Navy has the capability and sufficient capacity to protect America's global national interests in the future."<sup>34</sup> Still missing is discussion about linking the means (assets) to the methods (six core capabilities) in a way that supports the 'long view'. Considering the extremely long lead times in shipbuilding, the

imperative for defining the future fleet requirements necessary to execute the *Cooperative Strategy* is clearly upon us.<sup>35</sup>

A justification for 313 ships can be found within the Navy's *Annual Long-Range Plan for Construction of Naval Vessels for FY 2011*.<sup>36</sup> Required by law for each annual submission of the Defense Budget, the Naval Construction Plan provides a potentially forceful vehicle for articulating naval force structure and capabilities linkage. The Navy missed this opportunity in FY 2011. Instead, the FY 2011 Construction Plan only aligned naval shipbuilding (see Table 1 for 2011-2040 naval force levels) with the strategic priorities outlined in the 2010 QDR and with six key joint missions; it did not specifically link the force requirements to the *Cooperative Strategy's* six core competencies.<sup>37</sup> The *Construction Plan's* naval force projections are described as a balance between expected requirements and anticipated resources.<sup>38</sup> Resource consideration is vitally important, but it only addresses half of the issue if the discussion does not directly tie the forces to capabilities and missions. Without this linkage the naval force projections lose their explanatory power and may be regarded as just numbers on a page. Going forward, the *Long-Range Plan for Construction of Naval Vessels* could be the Navy's best means to integrate its force requirements with its desired strategic capabilities in a clear and precise manner for Congressional (and public) understanding.

	Near-Term 2011-2020 FY 2016	Mid-Term 2021-2030 FY 2028	Far-Term 2031-2040 FY 2040
<b>CVN</b>	11	11	11
<b>LSC</b>	90	85	76
<b>SSC</b>	32	46	55
<b>SSN</b>	51	41	45
<b>SSGN</b>	4	-	-
<b>SSBN</b>	14	13	12
<b>Amphib</b>	33	36	30
<b>CLF</b>	30	26	28
<b>Support</b>	27	46	44
<b>Total</b>	<b>292</b>	<b>304</b>	<b>301</b>

Table 1: Near, Mid, and Far-Term Naval Force Levels.<sup>39</sup>

Key: FY = Fiscal Year; CVN = aircraft carriers; LSC = surface combatants (i.e., cruisers and destroyers); SSC= small surface combatants (i.e., frigates, Littoral Combat Ships [LCSs], and mine warfare ships); SSN = attack submarines; SSGN = cruise missile submarines; SSBN = ballistic missile submarines; Amphib = amphibious warfare ships; CLF = combat logistics force (i.e., resupply) ships; Support = support ships.<sup>40</sup>

Secretary of Defense Robert Gates is on the record with numerous appeals for defense budget reform and with cautions about a coming environment of fiscal austerity. In a May 2010 speech he argued, “Given America’s difficult economic circumstances and perilous fiscal condition, military spending on things large and small can and should expect closer, harsher scrutiny. The gusher has been turned off and will stay off for a good period of time.”<sup>41</sup> In January 2011 Secretary Gates reiterated the significance of the Defense Department’s fiscal situation: “as the biggest part of the discretionary federal budget, the Pentagon cannot presume to exempt itself from the scrutiny and pressure faced by the rest of our government.”<sup>42</sup> The coming budgetary constraints further underscore the need for the Navy to link the forces required to the maritime missions conveyed in the maritime strategy.

Naval leadership seems to understand this dilemma and is seeking options to deal with it. In 2009 the CNO commissioned the Center for Naval Analysis (CNA) to evaluate a series of questions focused directly upon maintaining U.S. maritime dominance and retaining/building the force structure required to do so.<sup>43</sup> CNA was specifically asked to provide an evaluation of the characteristics of a “globally influential navy,” to define at what point the U.S. Navy would cease to be globally influential, and to assess the impacts of a fiscally constrained force structure.<sup>44</sup> The resulting report, *The Navy at a Tipping Point: Maritime Dominance at Stake*, laid out five potential basing and forward deployment options for the future global navy and, more importantly, defined a “global navy” as one that is “dominant, ready, and influential.”<sup>45</sup>

The “Tipping Point” articulated five possible “future navies” to maintain global influence; it then allocated risk to each, according to the overarching goals of each construct.<sup>46</sup> The five “future navies” included:

- Status quo navy that lets the bets ride.
- 2-Hub navy maintaining combat-credible hubs built around carrier strike groups (CSGs) in the Central Command (CENTCOM) and Pacific Command (PACOM) areas of responsibility.
- 1+Hub navy built around a CSG in PACOM or CENTCOM, not both.
- Shaping navy focused on peacetime engagement activities and crisis response,
- Surge navy with most naval forces brought home.<sup>47</sup>

The “shaping” and “surge” options, while legitimate, are neither suitable nor acceptable given their lack of support for the maritime strategy’s six core capabilities, and the

engagement envisioned by the current National Security Strategy.<sup>48</sup> Of the remaining three, the Navy appears to favor the 2-Hub navy construct with the hubs being centered in the Pacific (China threat) and CENTCOM (Iran threat). This construct could easily serve as the basis for the force structure discussion needed to revitalize the current maritime strategy and mature it as a foundational strategy document.

What the “Tipping Point” article did not define was specific numbers. It raises rhetorical questions but does not answer them, “Is a 285 ship-navy the tipping point or is it at 250, or 230? At what number does the Navy reach a point where it is no longer able to project combat credibility with constant forward presence? Is the Navy able to deter and reassure at 230 ships? It depends.”<sup>49</sup> Clearly, the CNO knows what he needs 313 ships for.<sup>50</sup> But he and the Navy must link this force requirement to its six core competencies; if it does not, then others may well do so. An example of this sort of outside help comes from the Final Report of the 2010 QDR Independent Review Panel (QDR IRP). The QDR IRP was established by the House Armed Services Committee in order to conduct an assessment of the assumptions, strategy, findings, and risks in the report of the Secretary of Defense on the 2010 QDR.<sup>51</sup> The panel was also charged with conducting an independent assessment of a variety of possible force structures for the Armed Forces. When addressing the current U.S. force structure as it relates to Asia-Pacific stability, the panel wrote:

First, as a Pacific power, the U.S. presence in Asia has underwritten the regional stability that has enabled India and China to emerge as rising economic powers. The United States should plan on continuing that role for the indefinite future. The Panel remains concerned that the QDR force structure may not be sufficient to assure others that the United States can meet its treaty commitments in the face of China’s increased military capabilities. Therefore, we recommend an increased priority on defeating anti-access and area-denial threats. This will involve acquiring new

capabilities, and, as Secretary Gates has urged, developing innovative concepts for their use. Specifically, we believe the United States must fully fund the modernization of its surface fleet.<sup>52</sup>

The panel goes on to specify an alternative number of 346 ships to achieve the surface fleet modernization goal. The number 346 is a fairly long way from 313 and the “end” (strategic interests in the Pacific) has lost alignment from the global approach of the *Cooperative Strategy for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Seapower*. The QDR IRP comments seem to suggest that the Navy is not reaching the public and decision makers with its strategic message.

Another development that illustrates the need for clarity in maritime force structure is the Quadrennial Defense Review 2010 directed “AirSea Battle” concept development.<sup>53</sup> The QDR dictates that AirSea Battle will “address how air and naval forces will integrate capabilities across all operational domains – air, sea, land, space, and cyberspace – to counter growing challenges to U.S. freedom of action.”<sup>54</sup>

The impetus for AirSea Battle is the anti-access/access denial (A2/AD) capabilities of Iran and China in their respective regions. AirSea Battle is intended to assess how U.S. power-projection capabilities can be preserved in the face of these direct challenges.<sup>55</sup> AirSea Battle is currently a joint Air Force and Navy planning effort that is in its first stages of development; planners envision U.S. Army and Marine Corps participation as the concept evolves.<sup>56</sup> This type of threat or problem-based multi-service discussion (and agreement) is essential for aligning future Defense Department acquisitions and potentially mitigating resource rivalries.

What is important for the Navy, even at this early juncture, is to identify what, if any, changes are likely to be derived from this concept and then to ensure that the *Cooperative Strategy for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Seapower* force structure captures these needs.

Given the goal of preserving access in the two regions likely to be part of the 2-hub navy construct, there should be plenty of efficiencies for the Navy to leverage in order to justify its proposed force structure. With the Secretary of Defense's tacit support via the QDR and the fact that the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Admiral Mike Mullen, has expressed public support for AirSea Battle, the *Cooperative Strategy for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Seapower* should directly support what becomes the expected long-term shape of the Navy.<sup>57</sup>

The opportunity to reverse the paucity of resource specificity in the *Cooperative Strategy for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Seapower* may be found in the development of the AirSea Battle concept and assessment of the CNA "Tipping Point" analysis just addressed. Naval leadership should strive to identify any force-shaping impacts likely to result from the integration of air and land power capabilities directed for AirSea Battle concept development. In addition, the basing and forward deployment decisions resulting from the "Tipping Point" recommendations will undoubtedly inform future force requirements. With this better understanding of the future, the final potential influence on long-term U.S. Navy acquisitions could rest on how well the Navy can coordinate complimentary capabilities with its closest maritime partners. Leveraging allied participation and coordination on combat and combat support capabilities provides an excellent opportunity for the Navy to take its Global Maritime Partnership program to an even higher level.

#### Building Maritime Partnerships - Enhancing Complementary Capabilities

The CNO has emphasized the development of maritime partnerships – especially since the release of the *Cooperative Strategy*. An example is the 2010 Global Maritime Partnership Game hosted by the U.S. Naval War College. The stated goals of the



game were to “identify the catalysts to instability and the impediments to forming effective regional and global partnerships in the maritime domain from both the U.S. and international perspectives. Specifically, these catalysts for examination included piracy, human smuggling, illicit drug trafficking, gun running, terrorism, natural disasters, and oil spills.”<sup>58</sup>

What is missing in this partnership discussion is focused deliberation between the U.S. and its closest allies about division of capabilities in the shrinking global defense budget environment.<sup>59</sup> Heretofore, maritime partnership translated to shared information and enhancement of maritime domain awareness for all participating nations. While this is a needed and necessary goal for peacetime operations, at the end of the day many of our partners cannot afford to maintain the full spectrum of maritime capabilities needed for combat operations.<sup>60</sup> Perhaps the time has come to redefine what maritime partnerships mean, and to leverage allied naval cooperation more fully than we have in the past.

The Royal Navy and the French Navy are both facing their own budgetary crises. British planners have been hastily developing recommendations for the future composition of the Royal Navy. The common factor in all deliberations is fiscal restraints. The pain is so great in both countries that mutual discussion centers on ways to combine their shrinking armed forces.<sup>61</sup> Maritime partnership must surely include shared maritime domain awareness as previously described, but it must also include complementary capabilities. It is unrealistic to expect our closest partners to give up all of their maritime competencies, but for western (and eastern) democracies that thrive on international trade equally, it makes sense for them to share their

strengths. Maintaining high-end/high-cost capabilities is killing our closest allies, while maintaining credible effectiveness in the myriad supporting capabilities is proving to be a challenge for the U.S.<sup>62</sup> Therein lies the common ground, but it requires our allies to trust in the United States and the U.S., in turn, to commit to supporting our maritime allies. A look at the realities on both sides of the Atlantic and Pacific oceans may help.

Naval leaders from throughout the world were asked in 2006 (prior to the release of the *Cooperative Strategy for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Seapower*) to answer the questions, “From your navy’s point of view, what elements do you think should be included in the U.S. strategy? What elements would you suggest that the United States avoid?”<sup>63</sup>

Rear Admiral Jan Finseth, Chief of Staff, Royal Norwegian Navy commented, “National commitments to real-life operations will always be directed by the political leadership, but any future strategy being devised by the United States or other nations should take on the challenge of integrating much-needed capabilities from other nations. Only then can we ensure that these capabilities are being identified and developed among all navies.”<sup>64</sup> The Royal Norwegian Navy is a prime example of a key enabler as a newly transformed navy tailored for littoral and coastal maritime operations with rapid response capability.<sup>65</sup>

The sentiment of our strongest ally in the east is very similar. The Japanese Maritime Self Defense Force (JMSDF) maintains a robust and sizable fleet that is anchored by a destroyer force of 41 vessels that would be crucial for execution of major contingency operations in Northeast or East Asia.<sup>66</sup> The JMSDF CNO in 2006, Admiral Eiji Yoshikawa commented on the then pending U.S. Maritime strategy stating, “Perhaps it is time for the United States to call upon and truly require its friends and

allies to lend a hand. Perhaps this is a time for delegation and shared responsibility among partners. No one nation should have to bear the burden of global security alone. Japan and other partners are ready to share this burden with their longtime friend, the United States.”<sup>67</sup>

Common ground for cooperative approaches obviously exists between Japan and Norway in the maritime domain and is representative of a growing international desire for similar arrangements. The best way to mitigate risks associated with this construct in the short-term is to restate the U.S. commitment to existing treaty and alliance commitments. Whether using Treaty of Mutual Cooperation and Security Between the United States and Japan or North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) security obligations, this approach starts from a framework rooted in history and tradition. From this beginning, more detail on capability requirements from all parties can be worked out to deal with expected future challenges. This international approach need not be limited to traditional U.S. partners and can be expanded to include key regional powers that benefit from maritime stability such as Indonesia or Chile. Most importantly, cooperative capabilities and resource sharing should be grounded on assumptions that would be considered vital or matters of survival to all parties – such as dislodging, deterring, or containing an actor disrupting access to the maritime commons.

By failing to acknowledge the need for planning and coordinating cooperative capabilities concepts, the *Cooperative Strategy* overlooked a great opportunity. Clearly, the current fiscal environment makes this concept appealing internationally, but it also opens the door for the U.S. Navy to lay out a cogent 10-20 year naval construction plan based on specific capabilities that can be augmented by our international partners.

Critics may cite the difficulty of achieving unity of effort in coalition environments and the natural tensions among allies. This is a valid issue, but the premise of complementary capabilities is achieving relevant sea control and sea denial capability in major combat operations. The bottom line is that any actor threatening the global commons or the viability of the sea lines of communication will threaten *all* those who depend upon those resources and pillars of commerce. Since state actors still dominate the maritime arena, the scenarios are more easily envisioned, and the division of responsibilities can be done with much more rigor than perhaps is possible for other domains. In order to firmly justify force requirements, maintain relevant maritime capabilities in a period of reduced defense spending, and enhance our partnerships with close allies, these risks seem well worth taking. The time is fast approaching where taking zero risk will not be an option for the U.S.

### Summary

Shortly after the release of the *Cooperative Strategy for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Seapower* Vice Admiral John Morgan (then Deputy Chief of Naval Operations for Information, Plans and Strategy and senior leader of the *Cooperative Strategy for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Seapower* development team) stated that “the new strategy will ‘lead strategic thinking’ in formation of future budgets. The intention is for the strategy to be ‘refreshed’ every two years, right before long-term budget plans are finalized.”<sup>68</sup> But there was no major statement in preparation for the 2010 QDR, and the CNO reaffirmed the Navy’s commitment to the original document in October 2010.

The *Cooperative Strategy for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Seapower* remains a relevant foundational strategy document. It clearly defines six core capabilities (ways) that the Navy will master in order to secure the end states of preventing wars and building

partnerships. What it lacks is specification of the necessary force requirements (means) to achieve these end states and attempts to outline potential maritime adversaries and threat scenarios of potential maritime adversaries. By not defining these requirements, the Navy risks losing the initiative because it doesn't clearly articulate the strategy environment to policy makers and the public in order to create an essential base of support for a long-term shipbuilding plan in a period that is certain to see defense spending reductions. The approaching era of reduced defense spending is a global problem that can be mitigated in the maritime domain through close navy-to-navy coordination. Coordinating capabilities with our closest partners will mitigate asset shortfalls for both sides, and will better define and justify U.S. naval force requirements going forward.

Defense spending will decrease, but the Navy's operational tempo is certain to increase, especially as ground forces are reduced in the Middle East. The time for the Navy to act is now, lest it risk having these crucial decisions being made by others.

## Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> Captain Peter M. Swartz, USN (ret)., "The Maritime Strategy Debates: A Bibliographic Guide to the Renaissance of U.S. Naval Strategic Thinking in the 1980s" in *The Evolution of the U.S. Navy's Maritime Strategy, 1977-1986*, Newport Paper 19, John B. Hattendorf, D. Phil., (Newport, RI: Naval War College Press, 2004), 195. Swartz states that *The Maritime Strategy* of 1986 was initiated by Admiral Thomas B. Hayward and "embodied the views of unified and fleet commanders as well as Washington military and civilian planners and Newport thinkers. The Navy Department and the fleet were now speaking with one sophisticated voice to – and increasingly for – the nation and its allies." Dr Hattendorf, also stated in the "The Maritime Strategy Debates" (pg 54-55) that the 1986 maritime strategy advanced the concept of Forward Area Power Projection. "The purpose of this strategy is, first, to deter war by convincing the Soviet Union, in political circumstances leading toward war, that a successful combat outcome would be unlikely. In war, it aimed to prevent the Soviet Union from achieving its naval objectives, thereby encouraging an early end to hostilities. Third, to ensure that at fighting's end, whatever the outcome, there remain afloat no significant Soviet naval forces to be able to threaten the U.S." With the demise of the Soviet Union, *The Maritime Strategy* (1986 version) became useless. In *U.S. Naval Strategy in the 1990s*, Newport Paper 27, (Newport RI: Naval

War College Press, 2006), 1, Dr Hattendorf describes the evolution of naval strategic thought in the 1990s, "As a result [of the demise of the Soviet Union], the U.S. Navy immediately faced questions as to what its role and functions were, what they should become in the future, and how they should be justified in terms of budget requests to Congress for the future development of forces." It should be noted that this is something the *Cooperative Strategy for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Seapower* does not attempt to do. The result of this evolution is a series of eight documents published by naval leadership spanning 1991-2000 which include, "...From the Sea: Preparing the Naval Service for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century," (1993), "Forward...From the Sea," (1994), and "Anytime, Anywhere: A Navy for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century" (1997). Dr Hattendorf concludes with "the documents in this collection were all designed to explain the U.S. Navy's broad purpose, role, and contribution to national defense as well as to summarize its guiding ideas and principles." As Hattendorf implies, these papers do not attempt to provide a full strategy.

<sup>2</sup> Admiral Gary Roughead, Chief of Naval Operations, General James T. Conway, Commandant of the Marine Corps, and Admiral Thad W. Allen, Commandant of the Coast Guard, *A Cooperative Strategy for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Seapower*, October 2007, <http://www.navy.mil/maritime/Maritimestrategy.pdf> (accessed December 19, 2010).

<sup>3</sup> Chief of Naval Operations, Admiral Gary Roughead, "Executing the Maritime Strategy," CNO Guidance For 2011 Memorandum, October 2010.

<sup>4</sup> Joseph M. Keenan, *The Cooperative Seapower Strategy: Time for a Second Engagement*, Strategic Research Project (Carlisle Barracks, Pa: U.S. Army War College, March 23, 2009), 6.

<sup>5</sup> William Pendley, "The New Maritime Strategy: A Lost Opportunity," *Naval War College Review*, 61 (Spring 2008), 63.

<sup>6</sup> Pendley, 66.

<sup>7</sup> Roughead, Conway, and Allen, 12-14.

<sup>8</sup> Roughead, Conway, and Allen, 12.

<sup>9</sup> Robert Rubel, "The New Maritime Strategy, the Rest of the Story", *Naval War College Review*, 61 (Spring 2008), 71.

<sup>10</sup> Rubel, 72. The reason that forces were not discussed, according to Dr. Rubel, was due to an internal Navy controversy. One agenda was set on adjusting forces for humanitarian assistance, the Long War, and Homeland Defense. The other agenda advocated for high-end combat forces. Rubel stated that "a solution could not be found if the 'dialogue' continued at the level of forces; therefore, the strategy project banned any discussion of force structure." This is an unfortunate outcome. The assumptions and rationales that informed each of the force structure positions would have had a direct bearing on the core competencies of the strategy and likely would have refined the ways (competencies) in a manner that more saliently justified the means (forces required). The Navy needs to have this discussion.

<sup>11</sup> Rubel, 73.

<sup>12</sup> Geoffry Till, *Seapower: A Guide for the Twenty-First Century*, (London: Routledge, 2009), 41.

<sup>13</sup> Stephen M. Carmel, "The Big Myth of Somali Pirates," *Proceedings*, No. 136 (December 2010): 35. Mr. Carmel is a senior vice president with Maersk Line, LTD, and is an experienced ship master. He provides an excellent comparison of the piracy threat in the Horn of Africa and that of the Barbary pirates in the 18<sup>th</sup> Century with, "Perhaps the best answer to the national-interest question goes back to the comparison of the U.S. position in the world order. Unlike the time of the Barbary pirates, the United States now properly has a major role in maintaining the global order, and the real issue is stability in Somalia, and by extension East Africa. There can be no doubt that piracy off the Horn of Africa represents a large threat to regional trade in Africa and therefore overall stability in that area. Stability in Africa is of course not a piracy mission – piracy being but a symptom. Back in the era of Barbary pirates, American interests were direct, and the United States took action to address those interests, and no others. That action protected only U.S. ships. The French, British, and Dutch had to do the full cleanup. Today the United States has no direct interests at stake and instead is acting for the overall common good, protection everyone else's interests."

<sup>14</sup> Rubel, 77. Professor Rubel added the following rationale with regard to singling out China as a potential adversary, "...why create hostility by singling out specific countries as threats? That is especially the case with China, with which we have a deeply interdependent economic relationship and which is working hard to conducting a "peaceful rise" foreign policy. It turns out that the strategy is getting some favorable reviews from the Chinese, which seems to me to be a small step forward that would not have taken place had we listed that nation as a threat. As the UNESCO [United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization] preamble says: "Since wars begin in the minds of men, it is in the minds of men that the defenses of peace must be erected."

<sup>15</sup> Barrack Obama, *National Security Strategy* (Washington, D.C.: The White House, May 2010), 43.

<sup>16</sup> Rubel, 70.

<sup>17</sup> Roughead, Conway, and Allen, *A Cooperative Strategy for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Seapower*, 7.

<sup>18</sup> Roughead, Conway, and Allen, 8.

<sup>19</sup> Roughead, Conway, and Allen, 9-10.

<sup>20</sup> Roughead, Conway, and Allen, 4.

<sup>21</sup> Roughead, Conway, and Allen, 9-10.

<sup>22</sup> Roughead, Conway, and Allen, 5.

<sup>23</sup> Spencer Ackerman, "After These Wars End, Come See Us," October 12, 2010, <http://www.wired.com/dangerroom/2010/10/navy-chief-after-these-wars-end-come-see-us/#more-33046> (accessed December 19, 2010).

<sup>24</sup> Robert Pape quoted in, Spencer Ackerman, "After These Wars End, Come See Us," October 12, 2010, <http://www.wired.com/dangerroom/2010/10/navy-chief-after-these-wars-end-come-see-us/#more-33046> (Accessed December 19, 2010). Other academic realists who have written about "offshore balancing" or "restraint" include, Barry R. Posen, "Stability and Change in U.S. Grand Strategy," *Orbis*, Vol 51, (Fall 2007); Christopher Layne, "Who Lost Iraq and Why it Matters," *World Policy Journal*, Vol 24, (Fall 2007), 38; John J. Mearsheimer, "Imperial by Design," *The National Interest*, Iss 111, (Jan/Feb 2011), 31; and Eugene Gholz, Daryl G. Press, and Harvey M. Sapolsky, "Come Home America: The Strategy of Restraint in the Face of Temptation," *International Security*, Spring 1997.

<sup>25</sup> Barack Obama, *National Security Strategy* (Washington, D.C.: The White House, May 2010), 21.

<sup>26</sup> Robert Kaplan, "America's Elegant Decline," *The Atlantic*, November 2007 <http://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2007/11/america-8217-s-elegant-decline/6344/> (accessed December 15, 2010).

<sup>27</sup> Robert M. Gates, U.S. Secretary of Defense, *Quadrennial Defense Review 2010* (Washington, D.C.: Feb 2010), vi.

<sup>28</sup> Roughead, Conway, and Allen, *A Cooperative Strategy for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Seapower*, 18.

<sup>29</sup> Samuel P. Huntington quoted in, Kaplan Robert, "America's Elegant Decline."

<sup>30</sup> Seth Cropsey, "The U.S. Navy in Distress," *Strategic Analysis*, Vol 34, No. 1 (Jan 2010): 43.

<sup>31</sup> Roughead, "Executing the Maritime Strategy," 1.

<sup>32</sup> Roughead, 1.

<sup>33</sup> Roughead, 5.

<sup>34</sup> Roughead, 5.

<sup>35</sup> Otto Kreisher, "Checkered Past, Uncertain Future" *Proceedings*, (Jan 09, Vol 135/1/1,271) CDR Kreisher's article points out some of issues currently besieging the ship building industry including, "The Government Accountability Office reported last year that the Navy's six most recent new ship designs had a cumulative cost growth of \$2.4 billion over original estimates and were an average of 97 months late in delivery."

<sup>36</sup> Director, Warfare Integration (OPNAV N8F), *Report to Congress on Annual Long-Range Plan for Construction of Naval Vessels for FY 2011*, (Washington, D.C., Office of the Chief of Naval Operations, February 2010), <http://www.militarytimes.com/static/projects/pages/2011shipbuilding.pdf> (accessed March 12, 2011).

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, 2-3, The Cooperative Strategy was mentioned twice in this report. First, the construction plan indicated that it "reflects" *A Cooperative Strategy for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Seapower*. Later, it indicates that it "supports" the maritime strategy. No specific linkage to the competencies articulated in the *Cooperative Strategy* was given. Instead, the construction plan



states that the force structure was “shaped” by the QDR strategic priorities of: 1) Prevailing in today’s war; 2) Preventing and deterring conflict; 3) Preparing to defeat adversaries and succeed in a wide range of contingencies; and 4) Preserving and enhancing the All-Volunteer Force. Alignment with these strategic priorities is important, but it should not exclude showing the direct alignment of the construction plan with the core competencies articulated in the *Cooperative Strategy*.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid., 4.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid., 12.

<sup>40</sup> Ronald O’Rourke, *Navy Force Structure and Shipbuilding Plans: Background and Issues for Congress*, (Washington, D.C.: Congressional Research Service, August 2010), 8.

<sup>41</sup> Speech by Secretary of Defense Robert M. Gates, Abilene, KS, May 8, 2010, <http://www.defense.gov/speeches/speech.aspx?speechID=1467> (accessed December 11, 2010).

<sup>42</sup> Speech by Secretary of Defense Robert M. Gates, The Pentagon, Washington, D.C. January 6, 2011, <http://www.defense.gov/speeches/speech.aspx?speechid=1527> (accessed February 26, 2011).

<sup>43</sup> Daniel Whiteneck, Michael Price, Neil Jenkins, and Peter Swartz, *The Navy at a Tipping Point: Maritime Dominance at Stake?* (Washington D.C.: Center for Naval Analysis, March 2010), 1.

<sup>44</sup> Whiteneck, Price, Jenkins, and Swartz, 2.

<sup>45</sup> Whiteneck, Price, Jenkins, and Swartz, 6.

<sup>46</sup> George Galdorisi, Antonio Siordia, and Scott Truver, “‘Tipping’ the Future Fleet,” *Proceedings*, Vol 136 (October 2010), 19.

<sup>47</sup> “Whiteneck, Price, Jenkins, and Swartz, “The Navy at a Tipping Point,” 23.

<sup>48</sup> Barack Obama, 3. A specific example of the NSS vision on engagement is, “The starting point for that collective action will be our engagement with other countries. The cornerstone of this engagement is the relationship between the United States and our close friends and allies in Europe, Asia, the Americas, and the Middle East—ties which are rooted in shared interests and shared values, and which serve our mutual security and the broader security and prosperity of the world.”

<sup>49</sup> Whiteneck, Price, Jenkins, and Swartz, “The Navy at a Tipping Point,” 41.

<sup>50</sup> Roughead, “Executing the Maritime Strategy,” 5.

<sup>51</sup> Emelie Rutherford, “QDR Assessors: Scales, Kohn, Talent, Edelman,” *Defense Daily*, Dec 15, 2009, <http://proquest.umi.com/pqdweb?index=3&sid=1&srchmode=2&vinst=PROD&fmt=3&startpage=-1&clientid=20167&vname=PQD&RQT=309&did=1921647381&scaling=FULL&ts=1299947204&vtype=PQD&rqt=309&TS=1299947410&clientId=20167&cc=1&>

TS=1299947410 (accessed 12 Mar, 2011). The four House Appointed members of the QDR IRP were MG Robert Scales, USA (ret), Professor Richard Kohn, former senator Jim Talent, and Under Secretary of Defense for Policy Eric Edelman.

<sup>52</sup> The Final Report of the QDR Independent Review Panel, *The QDR in Perspective: Meeting America's National Security Needs in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century* (Washington, D.C., 2010), 59-60.

<sup>53</sup> Robert M. Gates, *Quadrennial Defense Review 2010*, 32.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*, 33.

<sup>55</sup> Andrew Krepinevich, *Why AirSea Battle?* (Washington, D.C.: Center for Strategic and Budgetary Assessment, 2010) viii.

<sup>56</sup> Andrew Krepinevich, 2.

<sup>57</sup> Donna Miles. "Defense Leaders Laud Air-Sea Battle Concept Initiative," *American Forces Press Service* (June 7, 2010) at <http://www.af.mil/news/story.asp?id=123208217> (accessed December 19, 2010).

<sup>58</sup> David Reese, "Global Maritime Partnerships Game Focuses on International Information Sharing" U.S. Naval War College Public Affairs, October 8, 2010, [http://www.navy.mil/search/display.asp?story\\_id=56485](http://www.navy.mil/search/display.asp?story_id=56485) (accessed December 19, 2010).

<sup>59</sup> "Defense Spending in a Time of Austerity," *The Economist*, August 28, 2010: 20. This article outlines the increasing funding challenges facing defense leaders, "But Mr. Gates knows that after a decade of ever-rising defence spending, 'the gusher has been turned off'; now his greatest fear is that defence spending will be cut to curb the budget deficit. His dread is already reality for many European colleagues. This week Karl-Theodor zu Guttenberg, German's defence minister said he favoured suspending conscription, with the option of resuming it later, in order to create a 'smaller but better and more operational' army that would shrink by a third, to about 165,000."

<sup>60</sup> "Entente or Bust," *The Economist*, October 16, 2010: 61. The lengths that Britain and France have been going to in order to maximize their maritime (and other military capabilities) are very intriguing, "Talk of the pair's [Britain and France] nuclear-missile submarines sharing patrols is likely to remain just that. But there may be scope for agreement over aircraft carriers. [Negotiations] have ruled out the notion of binational crews, but they are still exploring other ways to enhance interoperability of France's *Charles de Gaulle* and Britain's planned two new carriers...The aim is to ensure a permanent carrier presence at sea for both countries."

<sup>61</sup> "A retreat, but not a Rout," *The Economist*, October 23, 2010: 69. Britain's defense review resulted in, "'No strategic shrinkage,' David Cameron claimed when he revealed the conclusions of the Strategic Defence and Security Review on October 19<sup>th</sup>. Others, particularly those in the armed forces told they must make do with much less cash, might be to differ. The cuts to the defence budget – 7.5% in real terms over the next four years- were not as swingeing as was once feared. But thanks in part to the \$60 billion worth of unfunded defence commitments bequeathed by the previous Labour government, the squeeze will still feel tight."

<sup>62</sup> Ibid.

<sup>63</sup> Gary T. Blore, "The Commanders Respond," *Proceedings*, Vol. 133 (March 2007) at <http://www.usni.org/magazines/proceedings/2007-03/commanders-respond> (accessed December 19, 2010).

<sup>64</sup> Ibid.

<sup>65</sup> Ibid.

<sup>66</sup> Jane's Sentinel Security Assessment – East Asia, [http://search.janes.com/search/documentview.do?docid=/janesdata/sent/cnasu/japns130.htm@current&pageselectd=alljanes&keyword=tank&backpath=http://search.janes.com/search&prod\\_name=cnas&keyword=#to\(link-\)-1131124877750150](http://search.janes.com/search/documentview.do?docid=/janesdata/sent/cnasu/japns130.htm@current&pageselectd=alljanes&keyword=tank&backpath=http://search.janes.com/search&prod_name=cnas&keyword=#to(link-)-1131124877750150). (accessed December 10, 2010).

<sup>67</sup> Gary T. Blore, "The Commanders Respond".

<sup>68</sup> Christopher Cavas, "New U.S. Maritime Strategy is Incomplete," *Defense News*, 22 October 2007.

